Attendees

**Council Members:** Christopher Paslay, Chair (conference call); David Maples, Co-Chair; Craig Reinhardt; Lisa S. Johnson (for) Matt Sewell; Keith Vire, PhD; Caroline Boch; Robert Fagan; Addie Edwards; Wesley Eddington; Alan McClain, ARS Commissioner.

**ARS Staff:** ARS Deputy Commissioner, Joe Baxter; Carl Daughtery; Chip McAfee; Robert Trevino; Otis Dixon; Rodney Chandler; Lynn Franquemont; Charles Lyford; Jonathan Bibb; James McCune; Maryanne Caldwell; Rhonda Young; Freddie Harshaw; Bernice Gunter.

**Guest(s):** Eric Treat, Debbie Eddington, Sha Anderson, Dani Fields, Tyrone Murphy.

**Call to Order:**
State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) Co-Chair, David Maples, declared a quorum and called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Mr. Maples welcomed all present.

**Approval of Minutes:**
At the request of Mr. Maples, council members reviewed the minutes of the most recent meeting. A motion to approve the minutes as presented was made and seconded. The motion passed.

**Comments from Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) Commissioner – Alan McClain:**
Commissioner McClain welcomed council members and thanked them for their continued commitment to assist ARS in addressing the needs of those the agency serves. As part of his comments the Commissioner indicated that the meeting’s agenda would be full including the ongoing Needs Assessment, changes to the agency’s Client Services Policy and Procedures Manual, the SRC Annual Report, as well as program updates.

**Needs Assessment Update – Robert Trevino:** Mr. Trevino provided council members information regarding the need for ARS and the SRC to complete the Needs Assessment. He informed the Council that every three years the Rehabilitation Services Administration, our federal partner, requires the Needs Assessment to be updated as outlined by the Rehabilitation Act. He informed the Council that the University of Arkansas - Fayetteville (UAF) had recently provided him with an update as to the status of the project. Mr. Trevino indicated that between October and November a total of 13 focused groups were conducted by UAF. He reported a total of 11 were conducted online using the UAF WebEx system and two of the groups, ACTI and the ARS Senior Management team were conducted in person. He indicated a total of 142 individuals participating. He reported that a written summary as well as specific comments would be included as part of the Needs Assessment report. He informed the Council that UAF would also be distributing an online survey throughout the State. For those who are unable to access online the survey will be provided by teleprompt and in person. The projected deadline for this part of the Needs Assessment is January 25, 2019. Mr. Trevino indicated the Needs Assessment final report will be distributed to the Council and ARS SMT with a target date of March 22, 2019. He stated that the process is going very well
and him being pleased with those who are conducting the Needs Assessment. He indicated Dr. Brent Williams and his team was providing updates on a regular basis.

**Review of the SRC Annual Report:**
(Prior to the meeting a draft copy of the SRC Annual Report was provided to Council members electronically.) A hard copy of the report was provided to Council members. Upon review and after discussion a motion to approve the SRC Annual Report as presented was made, seconded, and approved. Commissioner McClain indicated the approved report would be distributed to the Rehabilitation Services Administration, Department of Education and the Governor’s Office as required by the Rehab Act.

**Update-Client Services Policy Manual – Carl Daughtery & Charles Lyford ARS General Counsel:**
(Prior to the meeting a draft copy of the Client Services Policy Manual was sent to the Council members electronically.) Mr. Daughtery provided the Council an overview of changes made to the existing Client Services Policy Manual as required by state and federal laws, agency performance measures, and new updates to the agency’s VR case management system. He indicated that the document was made available for public comment consistent with state and federal requirements and had been approved by Governor’s Office and presented to Career Education and Workforce Development Board. Mr. Lyford continued the presentation by stating that approximately 12 comments were received from VR stakeholders, including Disability Rights Arkansas. Comments addressed such areas as client fairness, statutory/regulatory compliance, and formatting/typo’s and shared information related to specific comments and written suggestions. He reported the policy manual has been placed on the legislature’s Rules and Regulations Subcommittee docket for December 18th and the full Legislative Council on December 21st for review. He indicated that upon Council approval, the manual may be filed with the office of the Secretary of State and would go into effect ten days later (first of the year).

**Agency Updates:**

**Business Engagement-Rodney Chandler:** Mr. Chandler provided the Council information regarding the most recent Business Summit held in October. He reported the event started 4 years ago with a goal to create a safe haven for businesses to come and engage, to be educated, to be informed, and to receive information about disability strategies. He indicated that in 2017 40 representatives from businesses participating and over 90 individuals representing businesses from across the State coming to listen, learn and engage at the most recent Summit. He stated that 5 business customers had donated $10,500 to fully fund this year’s event. Mr. Chandler reported collaboration has been increased as part of the Business Summit effort including WIOA partners, AR Workforce Services and the State Chamber of Commerce. He stated that one of the goals of the Business Summit was to create a process to recognize businesses for their success with the creation of the Summit Business Awards which include: Learning (Emerging) Partner, Distinguished Service Award, Leadership Award, and Community Partnership Award. Mr. Chandler communicated a desire to increase the Business Summit by leveraging business partnerships and continuing to get commitments from businesses for the Business Summit. As part of his report Mr. Chandler indicated that in 2017 Business Relations the top six customers were Walmart, TJ Maxx, Lowe’s, Tyson, McDonald and Baptist Health who hired 214 ARS clients. He reported an increase in 2018 to 258 hires which amounts to an 18% increase.

**Field Services Update – Carl Daughtery:** Mr. Daughtery informed the Council that Field Services was currently serving approximately 14,000 clients with an average counselor case load of 157. He indicated that year-to-date 275 individuals had been closed as successfully employed. He informed the Council of recent goings on in the Field Program including a Transition Fair hosted at the Crown Plaza in Little Rock with over 180 students attending, a Job Fair in El Dorado, and a partnership with ACTI where over 50 students visited ACTI to learn of opportunities available for them. Mr. Daughtery also reported about his attending the most recent CSAVR Conference and of Commissioner McClain being elected as President of the organization.
Maryanne Caldwell - Transition Coordinator - Fayetteville Office: Ms. Caldwell presented a video introducing the Work-Base Learning Program for students with disabilities. She reported that the program started 2016-2017 with 16 schools across the state with that number increasing to a total of 32 schools for 2018-2019. She stated that the kids are getting great exposure as part of the program. Ms. Caldwell also informed the Council of a partnership with ACTI so that the students can receive credentials as well. She provided information about the 1-week film camp and presented a video regarding PSAs developed by students at the camp.

Jonathan Bibb – ACTI Update: Mr. Bibb provided council members an update regarding some of the happenings at ACTI. He indicated that it is the reporting period for the federal indicators and for accreditations. He informed the Council that training was provided for 21 students last year and 200 this year as a result of increased resources for students. He indicated that the Pre-Apprenticeship program started in 2016 with 25 students completing the program and this year over 100 students participating with 45 completing the program. Mr. Bibb informed the Council that ACTI is partnering with Workforce Services to obtain extra help positions so that regular students can be hired to serve as TEP mentors. Mr. Bibb concluded his presentation answering questions and concerns.

Announcements

Co-Chairman David Maples informed the Council that the next scheduled SRC meeting would be March 21, 2019.

Adjournment
With no additional business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned.